



## IN MEMORIAM

Last year we inaugurated the custom of dedicating the last issue of the volume to the members of The Tennessee Folklore Society who had died in the preceding year. That issue was dedicated to Mr. L. L. McDowell.

After that issue had gone to the mimeographers, we learned of the death of Professor Neal Frazier on November 29, the first vice-president of the society. His friend, Mr. E. G. Rogers, has written this tribute to him.

### Neal Douglas Frazier

I have been asked to write a memorial to your friend and mine, Neal Douglas Frazier. Not I, nor anyone, could write a memorial to Neal Douglas Frazier. His life and his work were his own memorial written indelibly in the hearts and memories of all who knew him well. Those who labored with him came better to comprehend the magnanimity of his spirit. Those who sat at his feet were emboldened by his courage, inspired by his culture, and elevated by his spirit.

Coming to Murfreesboro in 1923, Professor Neal Frazier established himself as a member of the staff of the State Teachers College which he served with devotion until his death on November 29, 1945, following the passing of his wife, Mrs. Annie C. Murphy Frazier, by only five brief years made very sad by her absence from their lovely home.

Many young men and women who passed through the corridors from his classroom brought away a reincarnation of the ideal of worthy aspiration and ennobled living. With his sensitive soul he loved the good and abhorred the sham and pretense which he saw in others. He looked for the good in his students and inspired this into becoming something nobler and better still. He was the friend and counselor of youth. He was a teacher.

In 1939 he published a small volume of poems written by Mrs. Frazier and himself titled "These Bring Peace". These poems are truly an expression of a philosophy of beauty, and of their own beautiful companionship in marriage.

At the time of his death Neal Frazier was serving as first vice-president of the Tennessee Folklore Society of which he had been a member since its inception and which he had served loyally with his time, his interest, and his contributions to its programs and publications.

May I set down here a sonnet which was published in 1929 in which the dedication was made, as follows:

To Neal Frazier

I knew him first when he revealed to me  
That passion of his heart to make  
God's love predominate in truth, and take  
This emblem of All-Truth to make men free.  
He lifted up his eyes toward Heaven to see  
God's great Magnificence, and for our sake,  
He found the key to all eternity.

A tender heart he had a kindly smile;  
He knew a heartbeat whether it be love;  
With lips compressed, he meditated while  
He plucked the thorn to find God's rose above,  
I honor him, and shall 'till life shall end,  
As worthiest counselor and kindest friend.

E. G. ROGERS

# THE SHORE SIGN

(A play based on the superstitions of the Cumberland Mountain folk)

## Characters

Granny  
Marthy, her granddaughter  
Ca'line, daughter of the family across the "holler" by Glade Creek

Setting - Granny's cabin

Time - early spring

(The room we see constitutes the whole of Granny's cabin-parlor, kitchen, dining-room, and bedroom. At one side is a high feather bed with a Jacob's ladder quilt for a covering and pillow shams embroidered in red. In the back center is a large fire place that gives evidence of being used for cooking although a small four-eye stove stands at the right of it. A fire burns merrily under a black iron pot on the stove; the fire in the fireplace is very low. A table spread with a clean white cloth stands at the right center.

(On the mantel is a clock flanked on each side by an ornate vase. One vase holds paper fire-lighters; the other holds a spread turkey tail. Many bottles, boxes, and oddments clutter the mantel.

(A corner cupboard and some chairs are at the left side of the fireplace.

(At the opening of the play no one is on the stage. Granny is heard from outside.)

Granny. Stir them leather britches,<sup>1</sup> Marthy, don't let 'em stick, whilst I finish this batch of soap.

(Marthy enters the cabin and slowly stirs the contents of the iron pot. A rooster is heard crowing quite near, Marthy goes to the front door and shoos him away as Granny enters from the back door.)

Granny. That rooster keeps a-comin' up, a-facin' thisaway an' a-crowin' fer dear life. That's a shore sign.

Marthy. Sign o' what, Granny?

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1. Horace Kephart, Our Southern Highlands, p 366



Granny. Somebuddy's a-comin', thet's whut.

Marthy. I heerd a schreech owl hollerin' last night, an' ye know whut thet means.

Granny. I heerd hit too-afore I turned in jest at the set o' dark. I wuz thet tuckered out frum grubbin' I couldn't pay hit no mind. I knowed it tokened Miz White's bein' tuk.<sup>2</sup> Spect thet rooster wuz a-tellin' me somebuddy's a-comin' ter git me t'help lay her out.

Marthy. You do might nigh all the layin' out, don't ye, Granny?

Granny. I birth 'em, I cyore 'em whin I kin, and whin I kaint, I lay's 'em out.

Marthy. Miz White's been porely fer quite a spell.

Granny. Hit's lung fever. They ain't nuthin' ye kin do. Even if ye hed a turn o' corn ground under ye when ye wuz a baby, the lung fever could still git ye.

Marthy. Pore thing. Eight chillern.

Granny. Ever since she wuz brought to straw<sup>3</sup> with thet last youngun she ain't riz. Jes' lies there pint-blank like a ghost woman.

Marthy. Didn't your mullein an' sweet-gum bark help her none?

Granny. At first hit seemed to, and the sheep tea too<sup>4</sup> but t'wern't fer long. Her sperrit jes' seemed clean spent with Ab a-runnin' atter thet she-painter frum the back valley road. I knowed when she got old and hard-favored<sup>5</sup> he'd start runnin' round with some young hussy. I thought at first maybe they'd tricked her when she didn't git no better, and I put the scissore under her bed to break it.

Marthy. Listen! Hain't thet old Dan'l a-yelpin' down in the cane brake?

Granny. Wal now, he's a-howdyin' whoever 'tis; hit haint no outlander. Old Dan'l knows 'em,

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1. Clee McGlassen, "Superstitions and Beliefs of Overton County", TFS Bulletin, VII, 23.
  2. *Ibid.* p. 21 (Hoot owl instead of screech owl)
  3. Mildred Haun, *The Hawks Done Gone*, p. 15
  4. Adelbert Redfield, "Superstitions and Folk Beliefs" TFS Bulletin, III, 18
  5. A. P. Hudson and P.K. McCarlin, "The Bell-Witch of Tennessee and Mississippi", JAFL, XLVIII, 55

Marthy. The vittles air about ready to come up.

Granny. Here, let me take a hand, an' ye run pull the fire-coals outen the soap-kittle. Don't ye dast stir hit none; don't dast tech the paddle. Hit won't mix ner set ef any hands tech hit 'cept the ones thet start hit.

Marthy. (As she leaves the room) Air ye aimin' t'ax 'em t' eat?

Granny. Now looky here; whenever ye hears tell o'me not a-axin' folks t'hev pot-luck with me, hit's a tale-idle. I'll go git some sass<sup>1</sup> an' some o' them pickles. Marthy, whar's them pickles ye put up?

Marthy. They spiled, Granny. They're all soft, and they plum stink too. I knowed I hadn't orter put 'em up then.

Granny. Shucks-up-a-gum-stump! Kaint I larn ye nuthin' chile? Sich momickin'. Any buddy knows not to work with picklin' then.

Marthy. I'll go git the butter frum the spring.

Granny. (moving around and grumbling) Spect did best set another cheer n'place. (She scratches her nose on the left side) Hit's a woman a-comin' shore.<sup>2</sup> (She moves over to the door and speaks to someone outside) Howdy, Ca'line Wheeler. Come in and rest yore bunnit. You've kivered a right smart piece- all the way frum Kittle Creek.

Ca'line Howdy. Don't mind if I do set a spell. (Speaking as she enters) 'Tis a fer piece even through the straight-o'-way from Pap's house. How air ye, Granny?

Granny. Tollable, tollable. No cause to complain. Jest a leetle misery in my back, an' I'm a-totin' a buckeye fer hit. I've had a gimp in my laig ever since thet cowbrute of Johnson's got out, an' I had to chase hit. Peers like hit caused a mort o'trouble. How's Lydy? How does she like that new brought-on paper<sup>3</sup> fer her walls?

Ca'line Ma's fair to middlin', I reckon. I spect she feels right prency<sup>4</sup> bout thet paper, but she aint said.

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1. Horace Kephart, Op. Cit., p. 367

2. A. Redfield, Op. Cit., p. 34

3. Marie Campbell, "Cindy Give Out a Singing to Her House", TFS Bulletin, III, 82

4. Ibid.

She's been wushin' fer somebudy t' come along thet knows how to jump a tooth<sup>1</sup> but hit's better now.

Granny. Draw up a cheer an' set. Marthy's gone fer the butter.

Ca'line. Hit shorely would pleasure me, but I et a bait before I left home, an' anyway thet little peach-bloom cloud over yon way mought denote rain.<sup>2</sup> As I wuz a-comin' I heerd a rain-crow a-hollerin'.<sup>3</sup>

Granny. 'Twouldn't surprise me none at all. I've hed a black-snake a-hangin' up nigh onter a week now.<sup>4</sup> Don't reckon youv' heerd from Miz White.

Ca'line. Thet's whut they sent me up here fer. She died last night, an' they want ye to come. But-but- I wanted to come on my own hook.

Granny. Umhum. I knowed hit. I bin a noticin'. Ye look kinder peaked too. Whose is hit, Ca'line? Be it Charley's? How long's it bin?

Ca'line. Three months.

Granny. Too late fer penny-royal tea<sup>5</sup> er turpentine then.

Ca'line. I don't want no tea; I want Charley back again. Emmie's come back, an' he's keepin' comp'ny with her agin.

Granny. I thought she give him the mitten.

Ca'line. 'Twas narrated around she did afore she left an' went to the valley. He said he didn't love her noway.

Granny. Ca'line, ye kaint trust no man, honey.

Ca'line. She's tricked him, Granny, away from me. I know she has. Kaint ye give me a charm to git him back? Effen I could see him oncet, jist oncet. Every night I've put my shoes in the shape of a T, hopin' my true love to see<sup>6</sup>. I throwed salt in the far<sup>7</sup> an' said, "Tis not salt I aim to burn, but my true love's

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1. H. Kephart, Op. Cit., p. 301
  2. Ibid., p. 361
  3. A. Redfield, Op. Cit., p. 37
  4. C. McGlasson, Op. Cit., p. 26
  5. M. Haun, Op. Cit., p. 149
  6. H. Kephart, Op. Cit., p. 359
  7. Marestán Chapman, The Happy Mountain, p. 131

heart to turn, wishing him neither joy ner sleep-  
'till he come back to me and speak"<sup>1</sup>. They ain't  
worked, Granny.

Granny. Ef ye could git a piece of string offen his under-  
gyarmints, we could trick him. Ef you could git  
his sock an' put nine pins in hit an' put hit under  
the doorstep, hit'll work a powerful charm<sup>2</sup>. Ef ye  
kin git him inside, rub turpentine on the door sill,  
an' then you've got him.

Ca'line. An' Emmie. I want her days to be long an' her heart  
to ache like mine is.

Granny. Wal now, ye'll hev to git me a piece of her dress er  
some of her hair.

Ca'line. I got some of her hair. I knowed you'd need hit.

Granny. (Busying herself with making a clay doll, using the  
wisp of Emmie's hair in the doll's head) Ca'line,  
build up the fire in the fire-place. Now stick three  
pins in this poppet's heart, an' every time you want  
Emmie's heart to ache turn the pins.

Ca'line. Thank ye, Granny, thank ye. I'd best be gittin'  
along now.

Granny. Tell Marthy to turn around an' go back with ye as  
fer as the new ground goes.

Ca'line. (leaving) Good-bye, Granny.

Granny. (Going to fireplace, shaking her head and muttering)  
All I done won't help her none. I seed her kill the  
most of my charm when she poked that stick o' sassa-  
fras wood in the fire.<sup>3</sup> I didn't say nothin' as I  
lowed hit wouldn't do no good noway.

Wal, ef Marthy takes he through the new ground, we'll  
hev a bumper crop o' corn.<sup>4</sup> Hit's a shore sign.

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1. M. Chapman, Op. Cit., p. 132
  2. Carl Carmer, Stars fell on Alabama, p. 216
  3. A. Redfield, Op. Cit., p. 32
  4. Urban Anderson, "Older Beliefs and Usages in East  
Tennessee", TFS Bulletin, III, 5.



## THE ANNUAL MEETING

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The annual meeting of the Tennessee Folklore Society was held on Saturday, November 2, at McMinnville, Tennessee, in the library of the McMinnville High School.

At the business session the following officers were elected:

President: Mrs. L. L. McDowell, Smithville  
Vice-president: Mr. Charles F. Bryan, McMinnville  
Secretary-Editor: Mr. E.G. Rogers, Athens  
Treasurer: Mr. T. J. Farr, Cookeville

The program, together with a brief of each paper, follows:

### Morning Session

Devotional

Rev. Hobart Massey

Welcome Address

Mr. Charles O. Jett

The Old Field School

Mr. C.I. Wood

Opening with a description of this type of school, with its loose floor-boards, fleas, and other inconveniences, the author proceeded to his own experiences in teaching in this kind of school. He closed with a list of some alumnae, including Ed Carmichael and Cordell Hull.

Why I am a Bachelor

Mr. W.R. Lassiter

According to Mr. Lassiter, no woman can possibly know and be able to follow all the superstitions, signs, and hallowed procedures that insure a happy marriage. For instance a good farmer's wife must know the times for planting things, the signs of the weather; a good mother must know everything about children, including the superstitions about names, the proper folk remedies for every illness, and all the games to play with them.

The Lore of our Branch Line Railroad Judge Robert L. Keele

A nostalgic account of the early days of the rural railroads, including the dangers and inconveniences, the informal customs, the hangers-on (hoboos, the Italian and his monkey, the Frenchman and his dancing bear), the Presidential special, the circus, the section gang and the commissary, and the wrecks and other disasters.

Song - The Wife Wrapped in Wether's Skin-

Billy Lassiter

Moonshine in Tennessee

Mrs. Ruth W. O'Dell

By request Mrs. O'Dell read her paper on moonshine which appeared in the last Bulletin.

White Spirituals

Dr. George Pullen Jackson

Dr. Jackson compared versions of the tune "Pisgah": the English ballad tune from which it is derived, the Sacred harp, Primitive Baptist and negro versions.

### Afternoon Session

Music

Mr. Lannis Wright and group

"The Old Georgia Road", "After the Ball", "The Eighth of January", "What is Home without Love", and "Stone Rag"

Pioneer Musical Instruments

Mr. Charles Bryan

Mr. Bryan made the point that all primitive instruments are portable, and suggested that such instruments quite possibly influence the melodic line of folk music. The instruments discussed and illustrated included the mountain dulcimer, corn-stalk fiddles, instruments of the pipe family, including cane flutes, the shepherd's pipe, and the syrinx. He also included calls and yells, illustrating with the old KuKlux bugle call, and the "nigger whoop".

Songs "The Knoxville Girl" and "The Farmer's Curst Wife"

Mr. Roscoe Harmon

Superstitions used by English Essayists Miss Frieda Johnson

Miss Johnson reported on references found in Addison to various superstitions surviving today, including those dealing with gypsies and their witchcraft, ghosts and haunts, insects, animals, fowl, dreams, absent lovers, and many others.

The Reticence of the Ballad Makers Dr. Charles S. Pendleton

In a study which he professes to be as yet incomplete, Dr. Pendleton sketched the historical, social, and political background for the period from which the earlier ballads come, showing that during the years 1200-1500 the common people were entirely submerged. The ballads were the songs these people made and kept for themselves in this submerged life, and Dr. Pendleton has examined their texts with an eye as to how they were affected by the times. He found that both church and nobility were either ignored or else spoken of unfavorably (all misbehaving women are "Lady"), and that nature serves only as a background or as a conventional symbol ("her lily-white hand.")

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The play, "The Shore Sign", was done as part of the class work in Dr. Edwin Kirkland's ballad class at the University of Tennessee a year ago last summer. The author, Mrs. Clara Chisam Bond, is a native of Pikeville, Tennessee, and a graduate of Milligan College. She is at present teaching in Sale Creek High School, Hamilton County, Tennessee

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Shortly after the publication of the last issue we were the interested recipients of a folklore bulletin from England. This publication, simply called Folklore Bulletin, is the official organ of the Folklore Fellowship and of the London Folklore Club. Their activities have apparently been somewhat restricted by the war, but now they are putting on a membership drive and offer a fascinating array of lectures, puppet shows, and monographs to Londoners. Those of our readers who wish further information should address Folklore Academy, 116 Kinloch Drive, N.W.9, London.

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The newest issue of Folklore Americas (June and December 1946, Vol. VI, nos. 1-2) has just been received. It contains a most interesting article on "Folklore in the School" by Prof. Ralph Steele Boggs, and a biographical sketch of Frank Goodwyn, the Texas folklorist.

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Members of the TFS have not been idle. Dr. Jackson has a new article on the Amish tunes ("The American Amish Sing Medieval Folk Tunes Today", Southern Folklore Quarterly, Vol. X, no. 2), and Mr. Bryan, our new vice-president and Guggenheim fellow, has a new cantata, "Bell Witch", which will be heard both in Nashville and in New York this season. Nor will the TFS be unrepresented at the Southeastern Folklore meeting in Birmingham on Thanksgiving night. Dr. Jackson, Dr. Kirkland and the editor have papers, while Mr. Bryan is chairman of the music division.

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May we remind all our members that dues for 1947 should be sent at once to Mr. T. J. Farr, TPI, Cookeville, Tennessee?